

[San Mateo County
of Supervisors]

Board JAN 06 1987

December 12, 1986

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

TO: Board Members

FROM: John M. Ward

RE: Report and Recommendations on the Homeless and Hungry in San Mateo County. (Item 56, December 16, 1986 Board meeting scheduled for set time--10:00 a.m.)

In February 1986, I directed my administrative aide, Deborah Collins-Stephens, to work with John Kelly, Director of Samaritan Family Kitchen, located at 1301 Cypress Avenue in the city of San Mateo. I had visited the kitchen on various occasions and was interested in the program and the numerous residents it served.

Deborah worked as a volunteer in the kitchen. This assignment gave her many opportunities to speak with the service providers and the guests who frequented the kitchen. During this time, George Riley of Community Services had directed his staff to prepare a study on the growing concern about homeless people in San Mateo County. In addition, former Supervisor K. Jacqueline Speier was working with a task force which was developing a plan for establishing an emergency housing facility in North County. What began as a specific board assignment in the community evolved into an overall review of the homeless and hungry within San Mateo County.

Deborah met with George Riley and his staff. She also participated in a meeting with representatives from the Core Service Providers. She received input from Supervisor Speier regarding the progress and plans of the North County task force.

I wanted to give John Kelly, Deborah, San Mateo County Service Providers, and County staff the opportunity to report to us on their experiences with the homeless and hungry and their recommendations for meeting some of the needs of this population. I also wanted to bring to your attention the report commissioned by George Riley and compiled by staff intern, Kim Baker of Community Services.

As you will note upon review of the attached reports and recommendations, we can take pride in the current programs we support and of the skill, compassion, and humanitarian approach our County staff and Core Service Providers take in dealing with a very difficult social problem.

DATE: December 12, 1986

TO: San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Deborah Collins-Stephens, Aide to Supervisor John M. Ward

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CASE STUDIES REGARDING THE HOMELESS AND THE HUNGRY IN SAN MATEO COUNTY

BACKGROUND

In February 1986, Supervisor John Ward requested more information on the Samaritan Family Kitchen located in San Mateo. As an outgrowth of that specific project, the issue of the homeless and the hungry within San Mateo County became the impetus behind this report.

After working as a volunteer in the Samaritan Family Kitchen during a seven month period, there were many opportunities to speak with service providers, homeless people, and many guests who frequented the kitchen. The information and recommendations within this report were formulated from talking and working with the following:

1. John Kelly, Director of Samaritan House and the Samaritan Family Kitchen.
2. Edie May Spiller, resident of Redwood City, who has been feeding and housing the homeless and the hungry within San Mateo County for over 20 years.
3. Barbara Whatley, Director of the Menlo Park Family Living Center.
4. Congressional Research Service provided by Congressman Tom Lantos' office.
5. Don Bryant, Beth Steckler, and Sonya Davis, staff of Legal Aid.
6. Mike Neal, legislative assistant to Assemblyman Robert Naylor, sponsor of the first and last month's rent program (which has been introduced and defeated in the State Assembly numerous times.)
7. Susan Platte, North Peninsula Neighborhood Services Center.
8. Staff of Community Services Center of Daly City.
9. Lola Clewis, Director, Bayshore Community Resource Center, East Palo Alto.
10. Graydon Simser, Executive Director, Coastside Opportunity Center, Half Moon Bay.
11. Bonnie Bowling, Community Services, County of San Mateo.
12. Max Torres, "Janice" and Ralph Oswald of St. Anthony's Kitchen in Menlo Park.
13. Betty Sedeno at Catholic Social Services
14. The many "guests" of the Samaritan Family Kitchen.
15. Former San Mateo County Supervisor and Assemblymember elect, K. Jacqueline Speier.



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INTRODUCTION

Supervisor John Ward had visited the Samaritan Family Kitchen early in 1986. He was particularly interested in knowing more about the guests who frequented the kitchen. With my instructions in hand, I set out to find:

- * who the people were and what were the common reasons for taking meals there?
- * how many were receiving aid? Were many simply slipping through our "safety nets?"
- * was this their only meal?
- * where did they live?
- * what projections for the future were available from the Hospitality Kitchen staff?

As I was driving to the site, I remembered the last time I had worked in a soup kitchen. It was 1979 and I was living in the city of Chicago. In my fashionable neighborhood on the near north side, was located a soup kitchen which was run by the local Catholic Church. I saw the destitute, the poor, and the homeless line up every evening for a hot meal. This was the year after de-institutionalization of the mentally ill and the streets of Chicago were literally filled with the victims of that act. Those types--the mentally ill, the alcoholic, and the drug addict, frequented the soup kitchen near my home.

The residential community accepted the kitchen's existence and volunteered to staff it. I worked in the kitchen the evening before Thanksgiving and still recall the faces which stared back at me as I dished out the food.

It was not a pleasant experience and I fluctuated back and forth from feelings of fear for my safety to feelings of extreme helplessness over the hundreds of people I served that evening. Those feelings--fear and helplessness, crept back into my thoughts as I drove to San Mateo. I remembered how deeply cognizant of the poor I had become while living in that large metropolitan city. The homeless and the hungry were everywhere. I saw them each morning huddled together in the subway stations as the rush hour commuters emerged upon the city.

Some of them became familiar to me--always in the same spot on my way to work. I suppose their presence made the residents and the city leaders more compassionate about the problems which led to their homelessness. There was certainly never any denial that they existed.

All of these thoughts were running through my head as I approached the Samaritan Family Kitchen. Upon arrival, I was certain that I was lost. The kitchen was located in a middle class neighborhood, in a middle class school. There were trees, flowers, and children were playing on the playground. This could not possibly be the site where 200 people an evening were fed. Upon entering the school, I met John Kelly, an ex-priest who had founded the kitchen in 1984. He quickly told me what needed to be done and the next thing I knew, I was ladling out rice and sweet potatoes for people who were lined up and hungry!

Within that kitchen stood a mass of humanity from all races and of all ages. There were senior citizens, young men and women, families, and a multitude of children. When I had a chance, I counted the children in one section of the room. There were 25-- infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers, and teens. There were families--a mother, father, and children at several tables. As I served the food and looked into so many hungry eyes, I knew that the homeless and the hungry had undergone a major metamorphosis since my last time in a soup kitchen.

There was nothing to fear here. The children stirred my every emotion. Full of energy with smiles amid such sadness. I realized then that the innocence of children was an extremely protective shield. That evening, these children knew not of poverty but only that their stomachs were empty and that the Samaritan Family Kitchen was opened to fill them. Only their parents knew that poverty was one more of life's obstacles to overcome.

The men, young and old, traversed through the food line. Their eyes told the story better than any words could ever express. I smiled as I slapped the sweet potatoes and rice on to the flimsy paper plates and I wondered why, amid a County so plentiful, these people had no other food than what was available in this kitchen.

The 160 people we fed that evening were humble and polite. I've gone back many times as a volunteer and I've become acquainted with the staff and the many guests. I've developed a composite of the guests who frequent the Samaritan Family Kitchen which might be a surprise to many people in this County:

WHO ARE THE GUESTS?

- * Predominatly families (a mother, father, and children or mother and children.)
- * A large increase in the number of single young males.
- * A large increase in the number of children.

REASONS FOR VISITING THE KITCHEN:

- * Unemployed--benefits are used mainly to pay rent.
- * Employed but at minimum wage.
- * Supported on a fixed income with a disproportionate share going towards housing costs.
- * Resident in a hotel and spending almost all wages on hotel costs because they can't save money to pay first and last month's rent required by most landlords (which is currently averaging \$2100 in our County.)
- * Unskilled or untrained for the job market--this is their only source of food--usually they have no shelter (homeless).

ARE THESE PEOPLE RECEIVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE?

- * The majority of the guests do not receive aid and are employed.
- * A majority do not want aid because they wish to continue with their jobs.
- * The homeless guests are probably entitled to aid but do not have a mailing address which disqualifies them for aid. However, as of December 1, changes in the General Assistance rules makes such guest eligible for certain types of assistance.

WHO THE GUESTS ARE NOT

- * They are not mentally ill.
- * They are not drug addicts.
- * They are not alcoholics.

If we can manage to look past the beauty of this area to the estimated 10,000 homeless who call the duck pond in East Palo Alto, the rest stop on Interstate 280, the parking lots of Lyons Restaurants and Safeway grocery stores their homes, we can begin to make a significant contribution to this population.

If we can accept the fact that the Samaritan Family Kitchen of San Mateo will dish out 36,000 meals in 1986 and St. Anthony's in Menlo Park, and additional 30,000 more, we can begin to accept the realities of our situation. I shared my fears of the homeless and the hungry, but those fears were based upon old experiences. The times have changed. The hungry and the homeless in this County are like you and me. Perhaps our greatest fear is that they could easily be you and me.

EVALUATION OF CURRENT FACILITIES

San Mateo County has two shelters for the homeless. The Mid Peninsula Family Living Center, located in Menlo Park, which serves as an emergency housing facility for the entire County, has the capacity to serve 60 people. The San Mateo Women's Shelter, which serves only battered women and their children, has a capacity of 20. New plans call for a third emergency shelter to be operated in Redwood City. A fourth shelter will be proposed for North County in 1987 by the San Mateo County Organizing Program.

The most common theme expressed by the various service providers could be summarized in one quote: "there is nothing that causes more anxiety to workers than facing these people without the resources to help." In June of 1986, Barbara Whatley of the Mid Peninsula Family Living Center turned away 46 homeless families because she had no shelter space available.

CASE STUDIES

There are seven community based agencies who provide County wide information, referral, assessments, short-term counseling, emergency food, shelter, and utilities assistance to low income County residents. These Core Service Providers submitted "typical" case studies which represent the homeless and hungry people they are working with daily. Two of the case studies are contained in this part of the report and the remaining case studies may be found in the addendum to this report.

CASE A The Franklin Family, July 1986

AGES: Mr. F - between 30-39
Mrs. F - between 30-39
Children: girl- 7
 girl- 10
 girl- 13

ETHNICITY: Caucasian

INCOME: Approximately \$1200 per month. Mr. Franklin works for a moving company. However, he pays a significant amount in child support from a previous marriage.

HISTORY: The family's rent was raised and they could not keep up with the increase. They were forced to leave that residence. The family temporarily moved in with Mr. Franklin's brother until they could re-locate.

Mrs. Franklin and the three girls currently live in their car because her brother-in law uses drugs and is a very bad influence on her girls. Her brother-in-law does not want them back in the house. However, Mr. Franklin stays with his brother to sleep and shower so he can continue working.

When Mr. Franklin gets off work, he meets his wife and children at McDonald's or Taco Bell and stays until closing to spend time with his family. Eating out every night, plus paying bills that the brother -in-law says are owed to him, makes it impossible for them to save money to get a place. Mrs. Franklin states that the situation puts everyone under a lot of stress, and is particularly unhealthy for her children, who must eat fast food and sleep in a car every night.

CASE B The Smith Family

AGES: Parents ages are unknown; child's age is five years.

ETHNICITY: Caucasian

Mr. and Mrs. Smith and their five year old son are residents of Daly City. Mr. Smith works as a longshoreman, but is presently laid off and receives unemployment benefits.

The Smith family sought emergency shelter from the Daly City Community Center. This family continued to live in a dwelling which was scheduled to be torn down by the landlord. Since they had nowhere else to live, the Smith family refused to leave the condemned building. The high rental rates and the fear of becoming homeless, kept the Smith family in this building.

The landlord was willing to work with the Center to re-locate the family. Daly City has no emergency housing program, therefore the Center was virtually limited with regard to resources. The landlord has taken legal action in order to get the Smith family to vacate the premises.

The Center provided the Smith family with a list of shelters located in San Francisco which permitted families. The family may need to separate in order to gain temporary shelter because there are only two family shelters in San Francisco. Other additional shelters are open only to women and children or men.

CONCLUSION

Solutions to the problem of the homeless and the hungry are likely to be as diverse as the causes. The first step--a crucial one is admitting that they exist in this County. The majority of people who work with this population believe that the answers lie within the private sector with leadership and vision stemming from the public sector. Not since the Great Depression has our country or our County witnessed such a large increase in the number of people taking meals at a local soup kitchen or seeking an evening's shelter.

We cannot continue to depend upon another government program to solve the problems of the homeless and the hungry. The federal deficit and the extreme cutbacks in state and federal funding will only make it more difficult for the County to service this population.

We are among the most prosperous counties in the nation with an abundance of talented, highly educated, and productive people living within our jurisdictions. The prospects of a public and private partnership, working together to aid the homeless and the hungry, is a goal that many believe is attainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Join the United Nations in proclaiming 1987 the "Year of the Homeless" by publicly recognizing and commending in a January 1987 Board of Supervisors meeting, San Mateo County organizations which are working to aid the homeless and hungry. Specifically, we recommend:

- A. The City of Redwood City for their courage, vision, and leadership in supporting the establishment of an emergency housing facility.
- B. The Mid-Peninsula Family Living Center of Menlo Park for continued work in providing shelter and resources to San Mateo County homeless families.
- C. The San Francisco Chronicle's Seasons of Sharing Program which has contributed over \$400,000 dollars to San Mateo County for use in first and last month's rent programs for County residents.
- D. The Samaritan Family Kitchen of San Mateo for providing over 67,000 hot meals to needy San Mateo County families.

2. Encourage a non-profit organization (such as the United Way) to begin a special campaign in 1987 which focuses on the homeless in this County. Monies raised through such a campaign to be directed towards the operating budgets of emergency housing facilities.

3. Direct staff to review the policy issues and operational costs for continuing appropriations of three emergency shelters and request that costs be brought back to you for 1987-88 budget purposes.

4. Demonstrate leadership and facilitate collaboration among local city, private sector, and non-profit organizations in establishing a first and last month's rent program. The County cannot afford to establish such a program and the State Legislature, in the past, has been unwilling to establish such a fund.

5. Support, once again, AB 146, which will be re-introduced to the California State Assembly by Assemblymember K. Jacqueline Speier. The assembly bill would require the state legislature to fund a first and last month's rent program for California counties.

RECOMMENDATIONS: (Continued)

6. Request that San Mateo County Boards and Commissions undertake one major fundraiser in 1987, to raise monies for food, clothing, first and last month's rent program, and emergency shelter for the homeless. The Boards and Commissions represent our largest link with residents of the County, coming from every city within the County. Such an effort could educate the public and provide important monetary support towards assisting the homeless and the hungry.

7. Direct County staff to investigate and to report back to you on the obstacles service providers encounter when working with the homeless. Solutions to bureaucratic problems could possibly be solved by County staff and Service Providers.

8. Direct County staff to investigate and to report back to you on the feasibility and legality of motels accepting Section 8 certificates.

9. Direct the staff of the County Food Bank to prepare a clear and concise flyer which advertises the rules under which corporations can take enhanced deductions for donations of food or shelter. The new tax bill, coming into effect in 1987, may serve as a confusing barrier for such contributors.

10. Direct County staff to give guidance and support to the Salvation Army's interest in establishing a facility where homeless persons can take a shower, wash and dry clothes, and receive telephone messages. Lack of such necessities prevents many of the homeless from obtaining or maintaining employment.

11. Direct County staff to establish a reporting system with the Core Service Providers which would delineate the types and numbers of people (families, males, females, etc.) who are being turned away for lack of shelter on a daily basis.

12. Bring together the many diverse groups, individuals, and organizations which are currently working with or studying the homeless and hungry in San Mateo County, by appointing a Board of Supervisors task force on these issues. Request that the task force:

- a.) develop short and long term goals for aiding the homeless and hungry.
- b.) educate, advocate, and promote the needs of the hungry and homeless to city councils, neighborhood groups, and private sector organizations.
- c.) report to the Board of Supervisors on a quarterly basis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our gratitude to the following people for their expertise and skill in working with the homeless and hungry, and their assistance with this report:

The Core Service Center Network for the outstanding service and dedication they give to San Mateo County residents:

- **Wanda Nalls-Holmes, Daly City Community Services Center
- **Jerry Kramer, Pacifica Resource Center
- **Susan Platte, North Peninsula Neighborhood Services Center
- **Graydon Simser, Coastside Opportunity Center
- **J Corinne Centeno, Fair Oaks Community Center
- **Lola Clewis, Bayshore Community Resource Center
- **Janet Hofmann, Community Information Project
- **Art Wolf, Catholic Social Services
- **Captain Charles Norris, The Salvation Army
- **Bonnie Bowling of Community Services for her guidance and input and for her professionalism and dedication to her job in Community Services.
- **George Riley of Community Services for his constructive criticism, his guidance and his dedication to County residents.
- **Maurice Dawson of the Housing Authority for his perseverance and determination in making the Section 8 program work in this County.
- **Beth Steckler of Legal Aid for her thoughtful recommendations on the County General Assistance Programs.
- **Ernie Hirose and Carol Ann Dodd for their continued dedication to needy County residents and their ability to continue to solve difficult social problems on a daily basis in the Social Services Department.

LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF SAN MATEO COUNTY

PETER H. REID
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

298 FULLER STREET
REDWOOD CITY, CALIFORNIA 94063
TELEPHONE (415) 365-8522

October 23, 1986

Deborah Collins
Aid to Supervisor John M. Ward
County of San Mateo
Hall of Justice and Records
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Ms. Collins:

I am writing to follow up on our meeting last week concerning problems facing homeless people in San Mateo County. At the end of our discussion, you requested our suggestions on steps which could be taken to improve the situation.

The following suggestions, if adopted, would by no means eliminate homelessness in this county. However, we believe that they would break down some of the institutional barriers which prevent destitute homeless or near-homeless people from getting the financial assistance to which they are entitled under law and which they need to pay for shelter costs. Many of our suggestions concern changes in the county's General Assistance program because under state law, this is the aid of last resort for people who are ineligible for other public benefits, and the program is controlled by the county.

1. Eliminate the requirement that people applying for General Assistance and Food Stamps have a fixed address in order to qualify for assistance. Although such a requirement is inconsistent with federal law governing food stamps and state law governing residency, it is the practice of many county welfare workers to deny or discourage people from applying who do not have an address. Although benefits are sometimes granted to homeless people, implementation is inconsistent. A clearly stated county policy combined with eligibility worker training could correct this problem.

2. Assist General Assistance applicants in obtaining necessary verifications such as birth certificates. For people who have lost their housing, keeping track of such things as birth certificates is nearly impossible. Currently, county workers assist AFDC applicants in obtaining birth certificates by requesting them directly from the vital statistics department in the county of birth. Extending such a service to GA applicants would help eliminate a barrier which prevents obviously needy individuals from getting aid.

3. Eliminate excessive verification requirements. Currently, county workers routinely request documentary or other written verifications of AFDC and GA applicants' circumstances. Much of this verification is not required by state or federal law and is difficult or impossible for clients to obtain. Examples of unnecessary or unreasonable verifications requested in the past include requests for written statements from former husbands or other people with whom the applicant is not in contact, written verification that the applicant is not receiving financial aid from schools in which applicant is not enrolled, letters from a bank when bank statements have been provided, written statements from landlords when rent receipts or leases have been provided and extensive written statements from a male housemate who is living with his wife and only rents a room to the applicant. Such requests greatly lengthen the application process and frequently result in the denial of aid because the client cannot get the requested verification. In such cases, the applicants' sworn statement, under penalty of perjury, should be accepted without requests for further verifications. If the county feels the verification is necessary, then the county should get the applicant's written authorization to allow the eligibility worker to obtain the verification directly.

4. Increase General Assistance grant levels. The current maximum benefit under General Assistance is \$257 - \$303/month. Of this \$158-\$176/month is expected to cover housing depending on whether the housing is shared with others. It is nearly impossible to locate housing, even shared housing or substandard housing, for \$158-\$176/month. Even if landlords were willing to rent studio apartments to 4 or 5 GA recipients who want to share, housing code restrictions would prohibit such overcrowding. The General Assistance grant levels should be increased to adequately reflect the cost of housing in San Mateo County.

5. Eliminate General Assistance sanctions for non-cooperation with Vocational Rehabilitation Services. General Assistance recipients who are considered employable must work without pay at the VRS workshop in Belmont two days each week. People who do not or cannot meet these requirements are ineligible for General Assistance for 1, 2, or 3 months, even if they are absolutely destitute and willing to participate in the VRS program. For example, a GA recipient whose grant was to be discontinued for other reasons at the end of the month was told by VRS that he need not go to the workshop. When he didn't go, VRS treated his no-show as wilful non-cooperation and a 30-day sanction was imposed. Some months later when the person was homeless and he reapplied for GA, he was found not eligible because of the 30-day sanction. The applicant had always been willing and available to work at VRS. The problem was resolved only with the involvement of our office. Since

1983 this policy has served to decrease the number of people receiving GA by 42% with no indication that the needs of these people are being met some other way.

6. Allow people to apply for general assistance throughout the working day. Currently, GA recipients are required to go to an 8 a.m. group intake appointment. Because most GA applicants don't have cars and have virtually no money for transportation an appointment at this hour is difficult to keep. Such a group intake could just as easily be scheduled in the afternoon or applicants could be allowed to apply the first time they come to the welfare office. The 8 a.m. appointments are an unnecessary barrier which at best delay the application process for needy people.

7. Accept AFDC applicants' statement of their immediate need for AFDC benefits. The state regulations governing immediate need give examples of situations but give the county the flexibility to grant relief in other situations. Eligibility workers often deny requests for immediate need unless the applicant has an eviction notice or a utility shut off notice. Applicants who are temporarily housed with friends who have no food in their home or whose homes are being foreclosed on, have been denied immediate need. Essentially, this means their applications are not likely to be processed before the 45-day time limit. Lack of permanent shelter and lack of food are two circumstances under which applications should be treated as immediate need cases. A clear policy statement and training of eligibility workers may alleviate this problem.

8. Grant General Assistance benefits to families that are financially eligible for GA. Current county regulations allow for GA payments to families only when they were denied AFDC because the family has an insufficient connection to the labor force. Needy families may be denied AFDC if one of the two parents is working over 100 hours and yet still have an income below the GA level. As the provider of last resort, the county has a legal obligation to financially assist needy families who cannot get AFDC if they meet all of the other GA eligibility requirements.

9. Replace lost or stolen GA checks quickly. The county's procedure for replacing lost or stolen GA checks is cumbersome and results in unnecessary delays which have led to clients being evicted. Lost or stolen AFDC checks are replaced within 5 days of the completion of the affidavit stating that the check was lost or stolen. Replacing lost or stolen GA checks within 5 days would

Deborah Collins
October 23, 1986
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relieve some of the hardship which inevitably results. ;

In your draft report, you made several suggestions which we have not addressed here. We believe your suggestions are excellent. Based upon our experience with homeless persons in the county, we particularly support: 1) the establishment of more emergency shelters within the county; 2) the establishment of a first and last month's rent program; and, 3) the establishment of a message center which has shower and laundry facilities. Currently, there is only one shelter and no message center in the county. The recent Redwood City experience demonstrates the difficulties in relying on sites located in cities. Consequently, the county should focus on unincorporated areas for locations. Given the time and expense of travel, the limited public transportation, these facilities should be located both in the coast and bayside areas of the county.

We hope these suggestions are helpful to you in preparing your final report. We have also included a couple of case studies for your review. Please call me if you have any questions about any of these suggestions.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



BETH STECKLER
Paralegal to
Tricia Berke Vinson
Attorney at Law

BS/es

Case Histories of Five Homeless Persons

1. Renee G. was a GA recipient who lived in a substandard apartment unit where there were repeated problems with mail theft. One month, Mr. G's GA warrant was stolen. He made an immediate theft report to the police and indeed, the police did recover the warrant which they were planning to retain as evidence in a criminal prosecution of the thief. Nevertheless, in spite of Mr. G's immediate report of the stolen warrant to the Welfare Department, it was 2 1/2 weeks before the warrant could be replaced. By that time, Mr. G's landlord had begun eviction proceedings which he was unwilling to stop. Mr. G's General Assistance grant was insufficient to allow him to make a deposit on a new place to live and he became homeless. Mr. G was then discontinued from GA because he had no San Mateo County address and the County was unable to verify his living arrangement.

2. Mr. W has been a county resident for over 15 years. In July 1986, he was out of work and needed money so he applied for General Assistance. A county worker asked him if he had an address because without an address, he was not eligible for General Assistance. Mr. W explained that he was living with different friends, all within a small area of the county, but that he could only stay a night or two at each place. Mr. W also explained that he had lived in the county for many years. Mr. W was told that he should go to San Francisco where they have more services for homeless people.

Mr. W found an arrangement where he could work in exchange for room and board, so he did not pursue his GA denial. It is not known if he reapplied when the arrangement fell through two weeks later.

3. Mr. X is a single man in his late forties who worked for many years in the computer industry in a highly skilled job. When Mr. X lost his job in February 1986, he applied for Unemployment Benefits and was denied. He diligently appealed his denial, but did not begin receiving benefits until July 1986.

Since Mr. X did not have any income to pay rent, he lived in his car. Mr. X came to San Mateo County in May in search of a job. Mr. X did not have money to buy food and lived off fruit, which he could pick off trees near public sidewalks. When his family loaned him \$75, he ate one meal each day at a fast food stand and bought peanuts to eat throughout the day. Mr. X applied for food stamps in May and was denied because he had no income for the previous 8 weeks and had no fixed address. Mr. X lost over 25 pounds between February and July, when he began receiving Unemployment Benefits. Mr. X appealed the food stamp denial, but no benefits were paid before July.

Mr. X also applied for General Assistance in May because he needed money for food and gas to look for a job. Mr. X was denied GA because he owned a personal computer which he felt was absolutely necessary for his job search. Mr. X wrote letters and sent tailored resumes to prospective employers. Mr. X used General Delivery as his mailing address, but was unable to supply a telephone number which he felt hampered his efforts significantly. Once he began getting his unemployment benefits, Mr. X would rent an inexpensive motel room for a couple of days if he was expecting a call back for an interview. Otherwise, Mr. X lived in his car, shaved and cleaned up at public restrooms and ate at fast food stands.

In July, Mr. X obtained an excellent job in the area working with computers. However, he expressed bitterness that during his one extended spell of unemployment, the minimal assistance necessary to help him eat and look for work was not available.

4. Mr. Y is a single man in his late twenties. In December 1985, he applied for General Assistance after losing his job. As an employable person, he was sent to the VRS workshop in Belmont. Mr. Y's General Assistance was cut off at the end of December, because the county anticipated that he would get unemployment benefits. Mr. Y was told that since he was being cut off, he did not need to continue to go to VRS. However, the County issued a 30-day sanction when Mr. Y failed to show for an appointment, even though Mr. Y had been admitted to the emergency room for treatment of pneumonia and a collapsed lung on the day of his appointment. This meant that he could not get GA for 30 days, but since he was getting the unemployment benefits, this was not an immediate problem.

Mr. Y reapplied for GA in May. By this time, Mr. Y was homeless, staying briefly with friends or relatives, or living on the street. Mr. Y signed up at VRS, but was sick the day of his first appointment. Although Mr. Y made repeated phone calls to VRS, he was unable to reach his counselor. VRS sent a letter notifying him of the next appointment to the wrong address and Mr. Y never received it. When Mr. Y did not appear for the appointment of which he was unaware, VRS notified General Assistance that a 60-day sanction should be imposed.

Mr. Y reapplied for GA in July and through the appeal procedure and the help of Legal Aid, was successful in having the sanctions rescinded since his non-cooperation was the result of problems with his mail, his health and communication with VRS. However, Mr. Y was then denied benefits because he did not have a fixed address. Because of loss of staff in our office, Mr. Y's case was referred to East Palo Alto Community Law Project for representation.

5. Mr. Z is a single man in his early thirties who has worked in skilled employment for over 10 years. In February 1986, he suffered a back injury on the job. He received worker's compensation for six weeks until his doctor said he could return to

work if he did not do heavy work. Mr. Z did not return to his former job which involved heavy physical labor for fear of further injury to his back.

In April, Mr. Z applied for Unemployment Benefits and was denied benefits. Mr. Z had to give up his apartment because with no income he could not pay his rent. Mr. Z moved in with his parents and later lived in his truck, at Memorial Park.

In May, Mr. Z applied for food stamps and was denied because he had no income and was told he must apply for General Assistance. Sometime in June, after appealing Mr. Z received food stamps for May.

Mr. Z received GA for about three months. He worked at VRS workshop during this time. He was still living in his truck because his GA grant was insufficient to rent an apartment or room. In October, Mr. Z began receiving state disability benefits because of his February work injury. He hoped to have enough income to rent a room somewhere after being homeless for several months.



to Debra

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COASTSIDE OPPORTUNITY CENTER

Providing Human Service Programs for the San Mateo Coastside

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ROBERT E. STROEHLEN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

GRAYDON SIMSER

September 8, 1986

John M. Ward, Supervisor
County of San Mateo
Government Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

RE: Case Study of a Coastside Homeless Family

Dear John:

Per the request from George Riley's office, I am providing a Case Study of a Homeless Coastside family.

Please contact me at 726-9071 if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

Graydon Simser
Executive Director



United Way Agency



Extension Unit

CASE HISTORY

FAMILY E

Family E is Spanish speaking with four children in the ages of 16, and twins 10. They came from El Paso last year in June in search of work because he had been unemployed for over a year in El Paso. His brother who lives locally had mentioned that there was plenty work here but didn't mention the housing crunch in the Bay Area. The husband did find work at a local nursery but couldn't afford the housing in his salary so he bought a small trailer and parked it at the State Beach where the family is still living at this time.

They came to us because they wanted permanent housing, and the sons wanted summer work. There was no affordable housing so the Social Worker referred the family to Housing Authority for subsidized housing, and the sons saw a Youth Employment Program counselor in our office and were placed in jobs. Two weeks into the Y.E.P. program the counselor found out that the oldest son had to leave the work site because the mother became ill and since she had a doctor in El Paso he took her to him, but she got worse on the trip and had to be hospitalized in Los Angeles.

Now over a year later the wife has been hospitalized often at the Chope Psychiatric Ward. We were involved in transporting her to a Day Center in San Mateo. They are still living at the beach because of rents being so high they haven't been able to find permanent housing, and now there's a complication because of the new State Park law stating that a family may stay 30 days only during the whole year. This is going to make matters much more difficult for this family because the only other choice is to rotate between Memorial Park and the Surfers Beach. The Mental Health Counselor and the Social worker are working closely with this family.

BAYSHORE COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER
2277 University Avenue
East Palo Alto, Ca 94303
Director: LOLA M. CLEWIS

HOMELESS FAMILY

PROFILE: 9 Member Family. Consisting of Husband and Wife, 5 Children, Wife's Sister and Husband, No Children.

ETHNIC ORIGIN: Mexican American

PROBLEM: Family moved to this area from San Antonio, Texas because of contracted employment. Contract was terminated. The husband obtained other employment, but the family was camping out at a public park and was referred to this Agency by the Menlo Park Police Department.

RESOURCE/
SERVICE DELIVERY:

Informational data was verified by this Agency and the family was referred to the Menlo Park Shelter. Although, the family was considered primary Participants for the Shelter Program, space would not be available for approximately ten (10) days. Therefore, the caseworker negotiated arrangements with American Red Cross-Palo Alto, and a local Church in an attempt to house the family at a Motel for ten (10) days until space at the Shelter was available. The results of networking resources provided seven (7) nights lodging at a motel for the family. The father would be receiving his pay check during the course of the seven (7) days lodging, but felt that the monies should be saved to assist in obtaining permanent housing. Therefore, it was the families' decision to camp out an additional three (3) days prior to available space at the shelter.

RESULTS/
OUTCOME:

Temporary shelter for approximately thirty (30) days at the Menlo Park Shelter, allowed the family time to save monies to obtain permanent housing. In addition, due to this Agency's relationship with Motel management, the wife and sister obtained employment through the Motel, which also helped in paying the first and last months rent for move in cost.

IDENTIFYING
GAPS:

In rendering services to this family the case-worker experienced reluctance due to family size and ages of the children. The children were split between the four adults in order to be housed at the motel. The cost to house this family doubled the cost of what the Agency would have normally paid for a three (3) to five (5) member family. This is due in part to the three day maximum policy relating to the availability of funds.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is the opinion of this Agency and staff that more shelters should be available to accommodate (larger) families. In addition, to increase the three (3) day maximum policy through the Salvation Army Voucher Programs. Also, the tremendous need for more affordable low-income, subsidized housing facilities through-out San Mateo County.

COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTER OF DALY CITY

134 HILLSIDE BOULEVARD

DALY CITY, CA 94014

991-8607



HOMELESS CASE HISTORY

Mr. and Mrs. Smith and five years old son are residents of Daly City. Mr. Smith works as a longshoreman, but is presently laid off and receives unemployment.

The Smith family seek emergency shelter from the Community Center. Apparently this family have continued to live in a dwelling which is schedule to be torn down by the landlord. Since they have no where to live, the Smith family acknowledged the landlord's request to vacate premise but have been reluctant to cooperate for fear of becoming homeless. The high rental rates have made it difficult to gain entry monies into a new dwelling. This family feels trapped and unmobil.

The landlord is willing to work with the Center to relocate the family. Daly City has no emergency housing program; therefore, the Center is virtually limited with resources.

Landlord has therefore decided to take legal action and begin eviction process in order to vacate his property. The Smith family fully understand the landlord's decision, but unfortunately feel they could stay in the deteriorated dwelling which is much better than sleeping in on the street until ordered by eviction process-court to vacate. The family were given a list of San Francisco shelters which were accessible to families. family has no where to go and prefer to remain in Daly City, where they have been residents for five years.

The family may need to separate in terms of gaining temporary shelter - for there are only two family shelters in San Francisco, the additional are geared for women, children, or men only.

COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTER OF DALY CITY

134 HILLSIDE BOULEVARD

DALY CITY, CA 94014

991-8007



HOMELESS CASE HISTORY

On August 26, 1986 a single pregnant woman with a two year old child sought Emergency Assistance from the Community Service Center. She stated that she was homeless and had no place to go and nobody to turn to for help. This young woman lived with parents in Daly City and contributed \$200 towards rent; unfortunately, father is an alcoholic and violently abusive towards mother and household. Client feared her life in the household and decided to no longer be a victim of the continuous harrassment; and therefore decided to leave the household, although she had no extended help from relatives or friends. Client therefore sought emergency housing. Her income included \$498 AFDC, although at this particular time of the month client had no money to enable her to gain temporary shelter.

After two hours of extensive counseling and completion of needs assessment process, the Center decided to grant client and child one nite shelter at Mission Bell Motel providing client return in the morning for additional search of an appropriate shelter.

Note: Prior to this outcome, this worker discussed client's situation with various San Francisco shelters who felt client would not be an appropriate referral since shelter line-ups begin evenings at 8:30 p.m. with the condition: shelter must be vacant at 8 a.m. next morning. Florence Crittton and friends in San Mateo accepted pregnant women in need of shelter, but not with children, (client did not fit this criteria).

Client was mentally and phsycally exhausted at the end of the interview. She was granted a "Hot Meal" at Burger King Restaurant, and assisted with two bus tickets for transportation.

The following morning, client and daughter arrived at the Center fully rested, relaxed and eager to seek temporary shelter. Client was given a list of several women shelter phone numbers and assigned a telephone to complete her task. Within an hour, client announced she located a shelter for pregnant women with children. The Missionary of Charity in San Francisco had a vacancy and were willing to provide temporary shelter for client and children, "Free of Charge" until neccessary. Client felt extremly lucky for this opportunity and was grateful for tne Center's support.

COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTER OF DALY CITY

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DALY CITY, CA 94014

991-8007



HOMELESS CASE HISTORY

Ms. J. is a 24 year old black unemployed single parent with a two month old infant. Previously, she was employed in a Child Care Center until she could no longer work due to pregnancy. For the past eleven months (since pregnancy began) client has been living in Daly City, renting a room from a homeowner for \$200 per month without a written agreement. Client was asked to leave her present living situation immediately (homeowner would not accept her rent money). Client claims homeowner was unable to cope with infant in household.

On August 22nd, client, now homeless, with no available resources from family or friends. Since her baby arrived in June, client is receiving \$498 AFDC benefit monthly with no savings to draw on as benefit covers only essential monthly living expenses (food, rent, formula, diapers). Ms. J. was referred to various Bay Area Shelters which included Mid Peninsula Family Living Center (appointment schedule for August 27, 1986). If accepted, She would be able to move in September 1, 1986 (leaving client homeless for additional eight days), Oakland Salvation Army Shelter (client to call for bed space availability August 23, 1986, as they were full at the time of referral), Raphael House (thought reluctant to accommodate a San Mateo County resident as AFDC benefits would need to be transferred, hence, delayed - would consider client as "last resort"), and Hamilton Methodist church (San Francisco) for interim shelter until a more permanent shelter arrangement could be made. Client concerned about the last option as she would have to stand in line nightly to obtain bed space with infant and leave shelter at 7:30 a.m., leaving her to care for infant "on street" during the day.

Encouraged client to reevaluate resources. Perhaps, a friend would be willing to accommodate her and infant on short-term basis until admittance to shelter. Client felt "fairly confident" she would be able to stay with a girlfriend on limited basis only, (due to overcrowding) until either Mid Peninsula or Oakland Salvation Army Shelter arrangement could be made. If not, client would pursue Hamilton Methodist Church thought this would be extremely difficult with infant. Asked client to advise DCCSC if arrangement with her girlfriend could not be made, for further additional assistance.

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991-8007



HOMELESS CASE HISTORY

Client was a 24 year old Hispanic man who had moved from New Mexico a year ago, and he lived with his sister in Daly City. Client had to move out of his sister's apartment because her landlord threaten to evict her because his name was not on the lease agreement. Client moved out and was sleeping in his car in front of his sister's apartment. He was unable to find work, and he had no income. Daly City police was called by the landlord because he was sleeping in his car in front of the apartment building. Client was referred to the Department of Social Services in S. San Francisco for emergency services by a police officer. He was told that he would be arrested for vagrancy if he was found sleeping in his car again. Client went to the Department of Social Services and was told to apply for general assistance/food stamps. According to client he was denied his application because he had no address and was referred to the DCCSC for emergency shelter assistance. DCCSC Case Worker found shelter for the client at the Episcopal Sanctuary in San Francisco.

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991-8007



HOMELESS CASE HISTORY

Client is a 33 year old black, single woman mother of three children whose ages range from five to ten years. On February 18, 1986 client was referred to DCCSC by the North Peninsula Neighborhood Service Center for emergency shelter assistance, because she was a former Daly City resident and she had received services in the past from the center.

Client was evicted from the Clarinada Apartments in Daly City on June 1986 after being terminated from her employment. Client's room-mate moved out leaving her to pay the rent and household bills. After being evicted, client moved in with her cousin who lives in Daly City. Client applied for AFDC/food stamps and benefits are pending.

From June 1986 to February 1986, She lived with her cousin and received AFDC/ food stamps benefits. She also has a Section 8 Housing Certificate. Client was not able to find housing. Client moved out of cousin's house because of personal problems, she moved in the - Hallmark Motel in San Francisco.

On February 1986, client received from the Department of Social Services her total AFDC grant award to move in the motel. Client's funds ran out, NPNHC paid two months stay for her with Salvation Army Vouchers and that was pending on possible Section 8 Housing. Housing was found for her in East Palo Alto by the San Mateo Housing Authority. Client was not able to move in the house as planned because repairs in this place were not completed, and NPNHC could not continue motel rent payments and client was referred to DCCSC for further assistance. A DCCSC Case Worker who got involved in this case was informed by Mr. Fred Lotch, San Mateo Housing Authority, that the Section 8 Housing would not be ready for another two weeks. The DCCSC Case Worker informed client that emergency shelter had to be found for her and her children until such time she and her children could move in the Section 8 Housing. DCCSC to pay the rent at the motel on a day to day basis until emergency shelter could be found. On February 1986, emergency housing was found for the client by the DCCSC Case Worker. Client was referred to Agnew Family Living Center in Santa Clara, and transportation was paid by this Center. During this period of time client's children attended a public school in Daly City.

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